



### MILITARY COUPLE

Chief Warrant Officer Billy C. Williamson, a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 185th Aviation Group, Company G, is pictured here with his wife, Cheryl, before he deployed to Iraq. Here is Cheryl's message to her husband: "How are you doing? We are all doing great. Taylor and Bailey are ready for their Papaw to come home (so is Mamaw). Can you believe you have been gone for a year now? Sometimes it seems longer than that. I just keep thinking you will be home in two or three months if we are lucky. I want you to know how proud all of us are of you. Iraq took you away from us for a year and a half, but we support y'all. We know you have to fight for what you believe in. You are always in my thoughts and prayers. Stay safe. See you soon! Richie, Kathy, Taylor, Scott, Rachel and Bailey send their love."

SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Dear La Toya ...

This letter was submitted by Amber Shaffer, 13, a seventh-grader at Magnolia Middle School. Amber is writing to her aunt, La Toya Lowe, a member of the U.S. Army who lives in Alabama.



Shaffer

I'm very proud of you and Frankie. You two are the only ones in the family to take the responsibility to fight for our country. That is very important to me because I know that you are fighting for our freedom.

La Toya, you really are showing God why he brought you into this world. You are setting an example for me and others. God will always be with you no matter what. I love you and I thank you for serving our country.

Amber

## Go, 'Dixie Sappers!'

Frankie Woodal submitted this "Bragging Rights" story about Spc. Phillip LeBlanc of Chunky. He is a member of the Army National Guard's 150th Combat Engineer Battalion.

By Frankie Woodal

special to The Star

I want to brag on my son, Spc. Phillip E. LeBlanc. Phillip comes from a long line of military family members.

His father, the late John O. LeBlanc, was a Vietnam Army veteran. His step-dad was a Vietnam Marine veteran. His first cousin, Pfc. Christopher Mabry, a Marine, was killed in action in Iraq last year. Several of his uncles are Army veterans.

Phillip has been in the Army National Guard for about 10 years now. I am proud of you, son. I know it will not be easy for you to go to Iraq, but keep your faith in the Lord and pray every night.

All of us here at home love and miss you very much. We pray for your safe return. I know you have had some hard times in the past, but maybe when you get back, you will have a better life. Everyone makes mistakes, just learn from the ones you have made. Until we see you again, son, you have your special place in our hearts.

Go, "Dixie Sappers!" Give them your best.

## Dear Auntie Marlene ...

This letter was submitted by Brittany Zimmerman, 13, a seventh-grader at Magnolia Middle School. Brittany is writing to her aunt, who is a member of the U.S. Army.

How are you? I'm doing fine and so is the rest of the family. Well, I'm working hard to pull up my grades and helping my Mom out at the house. Thanks for the card. I had a good birthday and Christmas. We all miss you very much and are praying for you. Hopefully you will be home very soon!

Brittany



Zimmerman

## Dear Marcus and Cloist ...

This letter was submitted by Tevon Bennamon, a seventh-grader at Magnolia Middle School. He is writing to his uncle, who is a U.S. Marine, and his cousin, who is in the U.S. Army.

How have you been doing? I'm glad to hear that you've made it home safely. I always wanted to ask you guys what it was like in Iraq. I wonder if I'll ever have to go over to Afghanistan or anywhere else to fight for my country.

Tevon



Bennamon

## To a daughter, from her mother

Josephine C. Spears submitted this "Bragging Rights" story about her daughter, Spc. Angela D. Ward, a member of the U.S. Army Alabama National Guard's 2101st Transportation Company. Angela is a native of Lisman, Ala.

By Josephine Spears

special to The Star

I want to brag on Angela Ward because she is such a sweet daughter, mother and wife. She has two boys, ages 8 and 11. Her husband, Jason Ward, works for Georgia Pacific.

Angela was deployed to Iraq with the 2101st Transportation Company in June 2003. We miss her very much and we are also proud of her for serving her country. We pray God's blessing on all of them.

We can't wait to see her sometime in March for her "R&R." She wants to be here when the boys get out for spring break. We started counting the days in January.

I want to see that smiling face again. There hasn't been a day that went by when she was home that she didn't call me to see how I was doing.

May God bless you, Angela.

## My son went gladly

Ellen Mustain's "Bragging Rights" submission is about her son, Specialist Robert A. Mustain of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 150th Combat Engineer Battalion, homebased at Key Field in Meridian.

By Ellen Mustain

special to The Star

Before the 150th was mobilized, my son, Robert Mustain was attending the University of Alabama as a full-time student. His goal is to be a science teacher at the secondary level, get married to his fiancée, Amanda, and raise a family.

Being from a military family, Robert always knew that there was possibility that his unit would be activated. No one put a gun to Robert's head and told him to raise his hand and pledge to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

He gladly did it and he is proud to be part of the HHC 150th and 155th and represent the state of Mississippi and the United States of America in the fight against terrorism.

His dad, mom, brother and the rest of his family and friends are very proud of him and love him very much.

Read how the **Civilian and Military Lives** of two ICU nurses, Charles Helms and Kem McEntyre, overlap in the Health and Medical section.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

### MILITARY HUSBAND

Cpl. Adam M. Stuart is a member of the 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Division, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He is the manager of the Hat Shack in Bonita Lakes Mall and is expected home in March.

## Everybody I meet asks about you

This letter is from Marie Stuart, an officer trainee at Citizens National Bank in Meridian. Her husband, Cpl. Adam M. Stuart, is a member of the 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Division, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve currently stationed in Iraq. She not only writes this letter to her husband, but to all the troops — thanking them for what they do for our country.

To my hero,

Everywhere I go, people always ask about you. Whether they know you personally, or just know that you are presently in Iraq, they are concerned.

They want to know how you are doing, what it's like in Iraq and when you will be home. They are sincerely

concerned about your safety and are also very supportive of what you are doing. They want me to be sure to tell you that you are in their thoughts and prayers. They also want me to convey a sincere thank-you to you for all that you are doing.

We all owe you a heartfelt thank-you. We thank you for fighting for our freedom and for our safety so that we may continue to live in the land of the free. We thank you for your dedication, your courage, the sacrifices that you've made — and most of all we thank you for wearing the uniform that you do so proudly and for serving the red, white, and blue.

You are a true hero!

Marie Stuart